

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

---

Maine History Documents

Special Collections

---

1853

## Report of the First Annual Meeting, Held in Union Street Church, Bangor

Maine Unitarian Church Association

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

This Monograph is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).

Unitarian Church Association of Maine.

---

# REPORT

OF THE

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING,

HELD IN

UNION STREET CHURCH, BANGOR,

SEPTEMBER 14 AND 15, 1853.

---

BANGOR :  
SAMUEL S. SMITH, PRINTER.  
1853.

# REPORT.

---

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1853.

The CHURCH ASSOCIATION OF MAINE met in the new Church on Union Street,\* and was called to order at nine o'clock. Rev. A. D. WHEELER, of Brunswick, was elected President *pro tem*. The Churches represented were those in Augusta, Bangor, Bath, Belfast, Brunswick, Bucksport, Calais, Eastport, Hallowell, Kennebunk, Perry, Portland, (First and Park Street,) and Saco.

The Reports of the Executive Board, Treasurer, and the several Business Committees were announced as the order of the day. These, with the exception of that on Charities and Reform, were read and accepted, as below.

The following Resolution, submitted by the Committee on Churches, was adopted unanimously by rising :

"*Resolved*, That while we are deeply sensible of the loss which we have sustained by the death of the Rev. SYLVESTER JUDD, and offer to his family and church our sincere sympathy, we would bow with submission to the will of Providence, and would cherish the Christian hope, that he is removed from the scenes of his earthly ministry, to higher ministrations in heaven."

A Discussion was introduced on the relations of this Body with the American Unitarian Association ; and Resolutions

---

\* This Church was dedicated on Tuesday evening, September 13. Sermon by Rev. F. H. HEDGE, D. D., of Providence, R. I. Prayer of Dedication by Rev. J. H. ALLEN, Minister of the Church.

were introduced, which were referred for action to the business hour of to-morrow.

Hon. J. H. WILLIAMS, of Augusta, one of the Vice Presidents, appeared and took the chair in the afternoon.

In default of the Report on Charities and Reform, the first hour of the afternoon session was taken up with a discussion on the subject, introduced by Mr. FENNO, of Augusta.

Adjourned at six o'clock.

Public services were held in the evening. Sermon by Rev. F. D. HUNTINGTON, of Boston.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1853.

The Association met at nine o'clock, Mr. WILLIAMS in the Chair.

The first business was to consider the propositions submitted by the Executive Board in the conclusion of their Report, touching the support of Missionary Operations and the support of feeble Churches in this State. Besides the facts there stated, it appeared that some misunderstanding had arisen, from the attempt made by this Body to act in the disposal of its funds "in concert with the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association." Rev. S. K. LOTHROP, D. D., President of that Association, was delegated hither, that the uncertainty might be removed by conference; and with this view attended the meetings of yesterday. After some discussion, it was agreed,

1. To strike out so much of Art. III. of the Constitution as refers to the above topic, so that the clause will read :

"They (the Funds of the Association) shall be applied, under the direction of the Executive Board, to meet the cost of Publications, and for any other specific object approved by a vote of the Association."

2. To adopt, in addition to the original draft, what now stands as the last paragraph but one in the Report of the Executive Board.

3. On motion of Rev. C. PALFREY, to adopt the following declaration :



"*Resolved*, That the members of this Association cordially approve the objects of the American Unitarian Association, are grateful for the aid heretofore extended by that body to the Churches of Maine, and will encourage contributions to its funds within this State."

Messrs. CUTLER, PALFREY and FENNO were appointed by the Chair a Committee to nominate the Officers of the Association for the ensuing year. Their Report was presented and accepted at the close of the day.

The following Resolutions, offered by the Committee on Churches, were taken up as the order of the day :

1. *Resolved*, That it is desirable that every Parish or Religious Society should regard itself as a Christian Church, and should acknowledge its obligation to fulfil all the functions of a Church ; and that the Ordinances of Christianity should be considered open to all who desire to partake of them.

2. *Resolved*, That it is not only important, but absolutely essential to the accomplishment of the purpose for which the Church exists, that its work should be considered as belonging not to the minister alone, but to the entire body of the Church.

Very full details were given, in the course of the morning, by the CHAIR and by Mr. FENNO, respecting the Church-movement in Augusta, carried on during the last year of Mr. JUDD's life, and since his death.

After an animated and earnest discussion, lasting the entire day, both Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

The afternoon session was closed with prayer by Rev. R. C. WATERSTON, who was present as a delegate from the Church in Augusta.

The morning exercises of each day were preceded by an hour of Conference and Prayer.

At the evening service of Thursday, the Sermon was preached by Mr. CUTLER, of Portland ; and the Lord's Supper was administered to the Congregation by Mr. ALLEN, Minister of the Union Street Church.

J. H. ALLEN, *for the Executive Board.*

BANGOR, September, 1853.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

---

After a brief notice of Rev. SYLVESTER JUDD, of Augusta, whose death took place on the twenty-sixth of January last, the Report proceeds :

The Association which we represent, and which holds its first Annual Meeting here this day, is in some sense an experiment,—one which must be got somewhat slowly and cautiously under way. We have not much to report of visible and concerted action. We must speak mainly of wants more or less consciously felt, of principles imperfectly developed, of plans still immature, and methods of action, which we have not as yet the confidence, the experience or the means for carrying fully into effect. It has been an object of anxious and frequent consultation among us, in what direction and by what agencies we should work most effectually. We cannot do much more now, than take counsel with you, and consult your judgment, and ask your confidence, in regard to the work of another year.

We invite your attention, therefore, to a brief statement, *first*, of the principles of religious union on which we consider this Association of Churches to be established; *second*, of the objects had more directly in view in founding it; *third*, of the means at our command for the execution of these objects; and *lastly*, of the course of action suggested to us by the experience of the year.

1. Our principles of union. These are briefly stated in the Preamble to our Constitution, to which we will only refer. The movement was designed to be not in any sense an exclusive one, or a sectarian one. It had its origin in our conviction that the liberal Churches, so called, untrammelled by any human authority, and unlimited by any human creed, had in their theory, if only rightly understood, the true principle of religious fellowship and Christian union. It seemed to us that, in the providence of God, we were called to make an explicit declaration of that principle; to set it forth as the basis of re-

ligious fellowship and action ; and to offer, if we might, the example of an earnest, cordial and effective cooperation, on ground from which no earnest and religious man should by any possibility or any implication feel himself to be ruled out.

We did not select the title "Unitarian," instead of "Liberal" or "Free," which some of us would still prefer, as marking any sectarian allegiance, to which we considered ourselves as pledged. Accepting the name as one which the community affixes to most of us, and which we neither covet nor disown, we accept it in the sense of that broadest religious liberty, which in a considerable class of minds has always been associated with it. We accept it, because it marks to us in general the line of our warmest religious sympathies. We accept it, because, while less invidious perhaps than any other, it signifies to our mind the liberty with which God hath made us free ; because the unity it implies to us is that unity of Truth in which God, Nature and the Soul are in harmony ; that "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" in which all true disciples are one before the Universal Father.

If we are asked whether we are sanguine that many other individuals or churches will adopt this platform, and act openly with us, we answer, We cannot tell. At least we hope that the principle of our union will be more and more widely accepted and influential among our religious organizations, though the form of it should be adopted only by a few. We are more concerned for the integrity of our plan, than for its present popularity. We will not falsify or compromise the truth God seems especially to have given to our charge, or limit by any arbitrary terms, expressed or implied, that fellowship which should be perfectly voluntary and free. Distinctly and in terms, in our Constitution, we invite the cooperation of Churches not consenting to be known by our name. In fact or by implication, we impose no terms but those of spiritual recognition, sympathy and good faith. It is not our business to make proselytes or seek them : but only to be simple, sincere and faithful in declaring our conviction, and doing our own work. Our bond of union is in no sense a creed, addressed to the human understanding. We "seek not uniformity of dogma, but communion in the religious life." We profess no sameness of opinion, we insist on no conformity with ourselves, as to a single point, speculative, dogmatic, historic or ethical. We are but learners, worshippers and laborers together, in the infinite domain of truth, holiness and duty. Our aim is limited only by the conditions of our exist-



ence, which is as a league of associated churches; and by the nature of our work, which is specifically that for which this alliance may render effectual support and help.

2. What, then, is the object we have in view? We may answer, in general, first, that the aim of the church-life which we would cement and strengthen, is to bring together in spiritual fellowship and for a religious end, those of every class, occupation, opinion, and outward circumstance; to give distinct form and expression to the religious emotions, convictions and hopes of a Christian community; to train mind and heart in the principles of pure morality, as applied to all the wants, situations, exposures and faults of common life; to give religious aim, purity of motive and exalted principle to the young, consolation and support to the feeble, the distressed, the helpless and the old; to hold as it were the balance, and apply the test of eternal and immutable Right, to forms of thought and action, diversified and innumerable, that come before the public mind. This is the essential office of Culture, undertaken and had in charge by the Christian church, as understood and sustained among ourselves. It has another office of Charity, determined by its relations to Society and the State. It does its work not by dint of theories, or sacraments, or religious exercises merely, but by a combination of living religious agencies, by which it lays hold on the individual conscience, instructs the general reason, and deals with the passion, motive, enterprise, hope or fear, conduct or endeavor, that mark our personal and public life.

More specifically, this Association seeks to make more effectual and intense the church-life which is to be known by such results. It aims to enlarge our thought and confirm our hope by the mutual counsel and aid it furnishes. It seeks to extend our relations to the religious community about us; to make our religious sympathies more generous and true; to interpret to us the lines of duty which Providence is tracing out. We thought it a good thing, to recognize a true church relation, or religious fellowship, extending over the broad territory of the State. The churches acknowledging our name and sympathy are few, and widely scattered. Some of them are new, and struggling with the difficulties which attend a doubtful experiment. Some are small and feeble, exposed to mistrust and hostility from surrounding sects, and craving both religious sympathy and material aid. A mutual understanding of our condition and wants will help us all. For a healthy religious life, the prosperous and strong need an intelligent



charity, as much as the feebler require sympathy and support. Besides, the action of a church which depends on no traditions, or fixed usages, is in some sense a perpetual experiment. We try to adapt ourselves, in what we undertake, to the exact condition of thought and feeling which our observation makes known to us. There is always room for improvement—always room for learning something new. Our work deals directly with the character, mind, motives and religious wants of men, with the changing conditions and wants of society. And no one can feel that he has learned all there is to learn, much less, done all there is to do.

In sketching the outline of our action as an associated body, it was endeavored to meet these several points, as far as we knew them, step by step. They are exhibited in the specific charges which our Constitution imposes on the Business Committees of our Body. In so assigning them, we do not conceive that we are putting forth any particular church theory, or invading, in the least, the principles of Congregational liberty. Our Constitution is explicit and unequivocal in that regard. Nor do we consider that we are instituting any system of over curious inspection, by which we should be made judges in any sense of one another's theory or practice. But we are so situated, that we may profit very greatly by knowing each the experience and trials incident to the rest. Where the methods of the religious life are so fresh and spontaneous, so shaped by present wants, so dependent on the character or training of those who apply them, as among us, free and open council seems the only way of doing justice, either to one another, or to the idea we hold in common.

The general results of our experience we trust to have embodied in a series of Annual Reports, which will have a permanent value to us, both as chapters in our religious history, and as suggestions for future action. And if we were asked to point out what we regard as the most distinctive and valuable feature, in our organization, we should have no hesitation in naming this—which unites, to our thinking, the precision and clearness of a business matter with the free and varied phases which the religious thought and wants must necessarily take among us.

As yet, it is not so much results as methods that we look for; and it will be doubtless found, that much thought and care has been expended in directions where we have been wholly unable to follow it up by effective action. This action has necessarily been limited by the amount of means at our

disposal. In making a general estimate of the sum sufficient to make a fair beginning in each direction indicated, so that we might not only have cognizance of our mutual counsels, but might be actual laborers in the great field opened to us in the State, we considered that we should require about a thousand dollars, to be placed at our disposal in the early part of the year; and accordingly, in the Portland Convention, a vote was passed soliciting donations from the Churches, to be made in the course of October last. It had already been decided, that no sums should be indicated or assessed, to be paid over by the several Churches; but that all should be in the form of subscriptions or voluntary donations. The objects for which any considerable amount would be required were necessarily left undetermined. The Executive Board would be governed by circumstances it could not anticipate, and by the amount of means over whose sources it had no control. As it proved, the larger portion of these means were not contributed till towards the close of the year; when they took the form of donations in behalf of two specific objects suggested by the Board.

The first of these objects was, to give aid to the Church in Bath, for the removal of a considerable amount of debt. It seemed to us the right policy, rather than scatter a small and uncertain income over a variety of objects, rendering slight and transitory aid to each, to secure, if possible, some one strong point, where the aid rendered might be of permanent good. Such a point seemed to present itself in Bath. One of the most flourishing and important towns on the seaboard, it offered a fair field to our religious enterprise. Between two and three years ago, a church was erected there, at an expense moderate in itself, but entailing a burden, and impairing the prospects of our religious society there. It was judged to be a suitable place for the experiment we wished to make. Four hundred dollars, being the greater part of what remained from our funds after deducting actual expenses, were offered to that Church, on condition that double the amount should be raised by contribution for the same object there. The proposition was readily and most generously met. Instead of eight hundred, more than a thousand dollars were subscribed, among the members of that Church, removing considerably more than half the debt.

The other object, for which we still hold in reserve a portion of our funds, is the printing and circulating an edition of the "Birthright Church"—a sermon of rare genius, interest

and beauty, which makes as it were the dying bequest to our course of our departed brother Judd. A proposition has been made to the American Unitarian Association to unite with us in preparing a large edition for this object. With or without the cooperation of that body, we recommend for this object an appropriation from the amount which the Treasurer's Report may show to remain on hand.

4. In regard to the future fulfilment of this trust, a question has offered itself, which we shall refer for consultation to the whole body of the Association. It is evident that, in selecting among various claims, it is hard to distinguish their relative importance; and, where funds are contributed by all, while some among the associated churches are applicants for the enjoyment of them, it is a matter also of considerable delicacy. This difficulty has been met the past year in the way already mentioned—by selecting a single object that seemed of sufficient prominence, and soliciting aid expressly for that. But to avoid the same or increasing difficulty in future from the same source, it has occurred to us that the following may be the better course.

We propose to make an estimate of the current expenses of the Association for the year. Of these the chief will be the printing and circulating of our Annual Report and accompanying Documents. If any thing should remain over, we propose to put it in the hands of the Committee on Publications, to be expended either in circulating such portions of our religious literature, and in such a way, as they shall deem most serviceable, or else in printing Reports and Essays, on definite assigned topics, to be treated in express reference to the objects and wants of this Association. For these purposes, we judge that a sum of about three hundred dollars will be required, and propose that that sum should be equitably apportioned among all our churches.

In order, then, to meet the other and more general objects of this body, we think it best that each case should rest upon its own merits, and make its particular appeal to the liberality of our Churches. A large part of our charities have always been distributed in this way. Thus the two Churches in Portland have sustained the entire charge of the ministry at large; and that in Bangor has contributed very considerably towards the support of the City Mission here. Such objects as these, while detracting largely from our resources, cannot come within the cognizance of our Board. Besides, a mission or circuit in some particular section of the State, or the aid re-



quired by a new Church in getting under way, may make a far more emphatic and effective appeal by its own interest and on its own merits, than could be made for it in a general statement from us, in making an application for a common fund. Such objects as these, we therefore think should be withdrawn, not indeed from the counsel or recognition of this Body, but from the direct and executive action of our Board; and referred to the appropriate Committees, whose statement will doubtless render a more complete justice to their several claims.

In withdrawing from a field of action which appears to us too large to occupy with advantage for the present, we do not feel that we shall be depriving our feebler churches of any thing of their present resources; but rather, that the channels of aid will be more freely and effectually open to them. Their condition and claims will be fully understood and represented by our Committees having their case in especial charge, and will become an object of deeper interest to those of more abundant means, in proportion as our ties of Christian sympathy are strengthened and extended. And besides, while we gratefully acknowledge the liberal aid which they have received in past years, from the American Unitarian Association, we are glad to believe that our kindly relations with that more powerful and experienced organization, remain unimpaired; and that our Churches will still be indebted to its cooperation, as they will doubtless freely render it their aid, in accomplishing the common objects we have at heart.

In rendering this account of our charge, we offer our most sincere congratulations, for the interest that has been exhibited in all our Churches from the first, for the readiness of their cooperation, and for the entire good will and harmony with which the designs of the Association have thus far been prosecuted. In anticipating the action of another year, we feel that many sources of doubt and distrust are already withdrawn; that we may undertake our labors with greater confidence; and that, having felt our way along hitherto, by anxious and frequent consultation on each question as it arose, we may hope to labor far more effectively, and with greater visible results in the time to come.

J. H. ALLEN,	}	<i>Executive Board.</i>
R. P. CUTLER,		
J. C. NOYES,		
DANIEL KILBY,		
FRANKLIN MUZZY,		



## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHURCHES.

---

It becomes the duty of the Committee on Churches, at the commencement of their Report, to notice the hand of Divine Providence in the removal of their Chairman, the Rev. SYLVESTER JUDD, of Augusta. At this first Annual Meeting of an Association in whose formation he took a deep interest and an important part, and into whose operations, had he continued, a large measure of his spirit would have been infused, his loss will be peculiarly felt. It has been felt as a public loss; not only by the Church which received the direct influence of his instruction and life, and was looking for increasing fruits of his labors; not only by these associated Churches, which he loved and which were bound to him by fraternal ties; but by our denomination generally, in whose knowledge and estimation he was fast growing; and beyond the limits of our own denomination, by all earnest and catholic Christian hearts, who, like himself, are able to look over sectarian bounds, and recognize and acknowledge the true spirit of Christ wherever found. The departure of such an one in his early maturity, when new spheres of effort were opening before him, when all past experience and reflection seemed to have prepared him for higher usefulness, is among the darkest of the Divine appointments. To the will of Him who best knows the fit time for calling his servants from their earthly ministry, we patiently submit. We would cherish an affectionate remembrance of the talents and virtues, the filial and cheerful piety, the steadfast faith, the earnest hopefulness, the abounding love, the simplicity and godly sincerity, the activity and zeal, of our departed brother; and we would feel the added responsibility which devolves on those who remain, when men of extraordinary power and usefulness are taken away.

Your Committee propose to consider some questions that may be raised respecting the Christian Church, its material and its functions; who compose it, and what responsibilities rest upon its members. These questions may be considered in reference to the local Church, and the larger Christian association, like that into which we are here gathered. They may

be considered also in reference to a Church regarded simply as a Christian Church, a member of Christ's body, and bound, in common with all the other members, to do its part for the promotion of Christian truth and righteousness; and in reference to a Church considered as a denominational Church, holding views of Christian truth which in some measure distinguish it from other Churches, and placed by the providence of God in circumstances which demand of it a peculiar work.

Our first inquiry is, What is a Christian Church? The obvious answer to that question is, that it is an association of believers in Christ for effecting by mutual cooperation, all the purposes that the Gospel was designed to answer in the hearts of individuals and in the world. One part of its object is the maintenance of public worship, of the ministry, and of all the institutions by which religion is presented to the eyes of men in a visible form, and is felt as a presence and a power in the world. Religion employs and sanctifies every part of our nature; amongst the rest, the social part. Christianity does not contemplate man as living an isolated life, or as prosecuting his religious progress by unsocial effort. As his natural instincts lead him to adopt some form of civil polity, and the highest civilization cannot be attained without it, so do these same instincts lead him to adopt some form of religious organization, without which his most complete spiritual development cannot be reached. The religious sentiment is eminently social. It craves sympathy. But it cannot give exercise to its social impulse without forms. It naturally and necessarily creates them. And these become fixed institutions, and react on the sentiment that produced them, and increase its intensity. The form which this organization assumes is different in different circumstances; but whatever its form, its name is the Church. The Church is the embodiment of the social element of human nature for the sustenance and growth of the religious life.

This account of the Church seems at first sight to describe with sufficient accuracy what we call our parishes, or religious societies. They are organizations for religious and Christian purposes. They have for their object the support of religious institutions, the religious improvement of individuals, and the maintenance of a permanent religious influence upon society. Every church edifice is a monument of the religious sentiment of its builders. All the money annually expended by our parishes is a tribute to the cause of religion. The weekly attend-

ance on public worship, if it means any thing, expresses a sense of the value and need of religious instruction and social prayer. All the functions of a Christian Church, if not actually practiced by our parishes, are logically deducible from the purpose for which they exist. Why then are they not called Churches? Why is not that specially Christian title given to the whole body of worshippers? The reason is, that a large majority of them do not observe the peculiar ordinances of Christianity. A small number only of the worshippers in our Churches partake of the Lord's Supper; very few of their children have received the seal of baptism; and by usage among us, the word Church is restricted to the body of communicants. We state this now simply as a fact. In two denominations of our fellow Christians, the Roman Catholic and Episcopal, the usage is different. A person is said to be in one or the other of those Churches, who attends upon its ministry and worships in its congregation. The fact of his being a communicant is not understood to be expressed by that assertion. With us, to say that a man is in the Church implies that he is an habitual communicant.

The question whether this is a desirable use of terms, is not a mere question of words. It is in fact the great practical question, whether it is most conducive to the spiritual progress and well being of all parties, that within the body of worshippers there should be another body, distinguished by the observance of the ordinances, who shall be understood to have an exclusive right to the ordinances, and into whose communion no one shall be received, but by their consent, and by a prescribed form. The alternative to this course is, that the Christian ordinances shall be open to all, like all the other means of religion, public worship and instruction, and the reading of the Scriptures; that no body of men shall have the power to determine who shall, and who shall not, partake of them; that every man shall be his own judge of his fitness for partaking, and that consequently his fellow communicants are not to be considered as responsible for his Christian character. The latter of these modes of administration is called open communion; the former, however easy the terms, and however simple the form of admission, is called close communion.

We can here only enumerate, in the briefest manner, the principal topics of argument by which each of these methods is defended.

Close communion is supposed to have the authority of Scripture and the usage of the primitive Church on its side.



It is thought to be expedient to distinguish the Lord's Supper and Baptism from the other means of religion, as possessing peculiar sacredness, since the offer of them thus becomes an incentive to those who have not yet partaken of them, and participation marks a crisis in the religious life, and affords an opportunity of confessing Christ before men, and since they thus become more impressive and edifying to those who join in them.

It is considered desirable that in every locality there should be a well ascertained and united body of Christians, pledged to aid each other's Christian life, by counsel, sympathy, admonition and rebuke, and who shall be responsible for each other's Christian character and have power to exclude unworthy members;—such an organization as the Church which practises close communion, is understood to be.

On the other hand it may be said,

That the condition of the Church in New Testament times, surrounded by a hostile heathenism, necessitated a different course of action from what is expedient at the present day.

That we should not attempt, by any devices of ours, to make the ordinances more sacred than they were made by our Lord himself;—that the purpose of the Lord's Supper, according to the simple terms of its institution, is an affectionate remembrance of Christ; that it should be open to every one who desires so to remember him; that of the sincerity of that desire each individual must be the judge in his own case; that no one has a right to prevent his approach to the table or to impose conditions; that the assumption of that right has led to great abuses and evils; that by means of it a small number of persons have, in many instances, erected themselves into a spiritual oligarchy, and by demanding unauthorized terms of admission to the Church, have precluded from the benefit of the ordinances persons equally worthy with themselves; that this was one of the grievances that led to the secession of Unitarians from the so called Orthodox Churches, and explains the fact that in such separations, the whole body of communicants, though a minority of the parish, was often found on the Orthodox side, Unitarians having for many years been systematically excluded from the Church, and deprived of the benefit of the ordinances, by the terms of the covenant; that, although the form of admission into our Unitarian churches generally is so simple and scriptural as to present no real obstacle to any one truly desirous of availing himself of the ordinance,—although the present small number of participants



in our Churches is not probably owing to those forms, but to other causes;—and although the immediate effect of merely making the communion perfectly open would not probably be to increase the number of actual communicants, yet the adoption of that measure would be just in principle, and would place our Churches in a right position, and is therefore greatly to be desired.

That granting, what may well be questioned, that close communion makes the ordinance more impressive and edifying to those who partake, that advantage may be more than counter-balanced by its effect on those who do not; that its tendency is to produce the impression that obligations rest upon Church members which do not upon others; that by refraining from joining the Church, they escape responsibilities which they would otherwise incur; that there are two standards of duty, one for church members, and another for those who are not; and that, so long as a man keeps away from the ordinances, he is bound only by the less stringent of those rules.

That the question of open or close communion, is not, as it is sometimes understood and stated to be, the question of Church or no Church, but the question, to whom shall the blessings of the Church organization be extended; that all the benefits to be derived from Christian sympathy, cooperation and mutual aid, may be equally well enjoyed in the one case as in the other; that the duty of aiding the Christian life of another, by all possible means, as opportunity is given us, is an universal Christian duty, resulting from the fact that he is placed within the sphere of our influence, and not merely from the fact that he partakes of the Lord's Supper at the same table with ourselves; that the circumstance of being associated for the support of religious institutions, worshipping at the same altar, and receiving the same ministration of the word, is a strong and peculiar tie of religious friendship, and places fellow Christians in a very near and interesting relation to each other; that an opportunity of marking a crisis in the religious life, and making a confession of Christ, is not lost by open communion, since there are other methods by which those important acts may be performed.

In proceeding, as we shall now do, to speak of the functions of a Christian Church, we would be understood to mean by that term the whole body associated for religious purposes, in other words what is popularly called the parish or society. If the members of a parish, a majority of which has not yet come to the Lord's table, would seriously address themselves

to the performance of those functions; if they would sit at the feet of their Master, and reverently seek his truth, and earnestly endeavor to live together his life, and to promote the influence of his Gospel in the world, it may be reasonably anticipated that the ordinances would soon be generally observed among them, and that the apparent solecism of giving the name of a Church to a body in which the ordinances are observed only by a small minority, would cease to exist.

In speaking of the work of a Church, we would also be understood to mean exactly what we say, and not the unaided work of the minister alone. The Church precedes and includes the ministry. This was the original idea of Congregational Church organization. The members first gathered themselves into Church estate, under the general charter of their Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"—and then they chose a pastor. Their election constituted the individual chosen a minister of the Gospel, and gave him authority to administer the ordinances. He might receive a perfectly valid ordination from the hands of the lay brethren, without the aid of neighboring Churches, although their presence was usually asked, as an expression of Christian fellowship. The Pastor and the Church together were the depository and agent of Gospel influences in the community. Certain important functions were exercised by the Pastor alone; but so far as the members were competent to cooperate with him, it was considered their duty to do so. He was not left to feel as if he were laboring alone. He was sustained by the sympathy, encouraged by the prayers, and strengthened by the help, of the laity. It was a just and beautiful idea of a Christian Church. It is to be lamented that it has been so much neglected or forgotten.

The duties of a Church, may be distinguished into those which it owes to itself, that is, the reciprocal duties of the members to each other, and those which it owes to the surrounding community. Its first duty, and the first condition of its usefulness in the world, is its own self-culture. If it is to burn and shine before men, it must generate light and heat within itself. First, it must have light. There is need of clear and well defined and settled views of religious truth. We presume the assertion will not be disputed, that in general men's religious knowledge is not in proportion to their knowledge on other subjects; that there is by no means the same amount of clear thought, definite opinion and accurate knowledge on these subjects, as on most matters of secular interest;



that intelligent, reading, thinking men, men whose practical judgment has been developed by the transaction of business, and men whose intellectual acuteness has been trained by professional practice, are content with vague notions and unexamined traditionary opinions on the great themes of God, immortality, and duty, when they would not be satisfied with equally indistinct views on any of the social, economical and political questions of the day. A mere intellectual appreciation of religious truth is of little value, unless it kindle feeling and result in action. Yet is it a foundation that must be laid for the superstructure of a stable and symmetrical religious character. The Church affords opportunity and means for the accomplishment of this important end. It is a school of Christ, in which by free inquiry and a comparison of various opinions, the learners may assist each other in attaining high and pure views of Christian truth.

Secondly, a Church must have internal heat. Its members should sustain and promote each other's religious life and growth, by mutual sympathy, free Christian intercourse and social prayer. As we have before said, the highest spiritual development cannot be attained without it. The church organization is the result of an effort of man's social nature to supply one of its own deeply seated wants. The members of a Church should feel the ties that bind them to each other; they should regard their mutual relations as among the most important which they sustain. It is to be feared that a failure to fulfil this duty of mutual acquaintance, this first condition of a title to the name of a Church, is a serious impediment to the growth of many of our Churches.

Every local Church owes a duty to the community in the midst of which it is placed. The ecclesiastical organization of New England has undergone a great change since the early period of its history. Originally the parish was territorial. All who lived within its limits were considered as belonging to it; all contributed, according to their means, to its support; all had a place in the Church, and a claim on the pastoral attention of the minister. Then each town had usually its one Church, in which all the inhabitants worshipped; now, most towns have several, each with its little circle of attendants, and too often half the population is unconnected with any of them. We believe that we are far within the bounds of truth in saying, that a majority of the people of this State are, in this sense, unchurched; that in most of our towns, if the numbers were added together of those, not merely who have at-

tended the several churches on any given Sunday, but of those who are accustomed to attend them, who may be considered as belonging, in any sense, to their congregations, their amount would not be found equal to half the number of inhabitants. The rest receive only those influences of Christianity which persons born in a Christian community cannot escape. They come under no direct administration of religion.

This unhappy state of things has been the gradual effect of causes that could not have been counteracted. The perfect religious freedom and the intense intellectual activity that distinguish New England naturally produced numerous and great varieties of theological opinion. Those differences rendered the continuance of the territorial parish and the support of religion by taxation impossible, and necessitated the introduction of the voluntary system ; which system throws the whole maintenance of religious institutions upon a few, limits the society to the number of those who pay for its support, and leaves all who are unable or unwilling to do so, outside the pale of the church.

An immediate and complete remedy of this evil is not very obvious. It may be that the intellectual freedom and activity which have produced division, may, in their continued operation, effect a truer and better unity than that which they have marred, and that the times will at length return, when the presence of the church, with all its holy influences will again pervade the community, and be felt in its remotest and lowest recesses. But none of us now living can hope to see that day.

Meanwhile, it is the duty of every church to do what it can in its own neighborhood. In the state of things just described, a true and living church is a light shining in a dark place. It should regard itself as a missionary station. It should not consider the purpose of its institution answered, when it has provided accommodation for public worship, and the means of religious instruction, for itself. It should carry the Gospel to those who, for the very reason that they greatly need it, do not ask or seek for it. It is an indispensable means even of its own best self culture, that it should make constant and systematic aggression on surrounding indifference, irreligion, ignorance and sin.

One specific measure for the accomplishment of this end we would briefly indicate :—the establishment of Sunday Schools for the children of parents not connected with our churches. Such schools will be likely to bring the parents within the sphere of religious influence ; and, in case they should be led



to desire to attend public worship, comfortable and eligible seats should be ready for them and they should be immediately recognized by the minister and the church as belonging to the body.

In conclusion, your committee would say a few words on the great topic of the duty of our associated Church in its denominational position. Every church owes a duty to the truth, that is, to what it deliberately and conscientiously believes to be the truth. There is a right and just spirit of proselytism, which was expressed by Paul when he said "Would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am." To believe that a system of doctrines is true, is to believe that, if thoroughly comprehended and heartily embraced, it is better fitted than any other to produce elevated religious character. Every one ought therefore to desire to see the opinions which he holds understood and received. He should be liberal towards other denominations, that is, willing to admit the purity of their motives, and to listen candidly to their arguments; but not indifferent to the truth. Among the innumerable varieties of temperament, mental constitution, intellectual and moral culture, and spiritual development, which exist among men, individuals are found who can be best edified by each of manifold forms in which christian truth has been held. Undoubtedly there are multitudes who would be best edified by that form of it which we hold, who are unconsciously waiting for this exhibition of Christian truth, whom these views alone can save from irreligion and unbelief, and would guide in a progressive religious life. Facts which are continually coming to our notice prove this to be the case. Hence our obligation to do all that in us lies, to have those views known, understood and felt.

If we were required to specify the particular duties, which under the general duty of fidelity to the truth, our position as a denomination demands of us at this time, we should say that they were,

1st. To assert perfect freedom of religious inquiry, in opposition to the restrictions of creeds and ecclesiastical domination.

2d. To ascertain just views of the authority and character of the Scriptures, in opposition on the one hand to the perversions and abuses of them, to which the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration has led, and on the other to the irreverence and licentiousness that have resulted from a re-action from

that doctrine; and to establish such principles of criticism and interpretation, as shall liberate the spirit from the letter, and thus make the records of revelation most conducive to the religious life.

3d. To maintain in opposition to the dogmas of the Calvinistic School, such views of the divine character and of human nature as are most favorable to a manly, rational and cheerful piety, and a broad and generous philanthropy.

4th. To assert the identity of religion with entire rectitude of heart, character and action; to vindicate its claim to inspire and control every form and department of individual, domestic, social and religious life.

We would not be understood to claim for our denomination the exclusive occupation of these spheres of action, or to imply that we have been left to labor in them alone. We have undertaken to define our own sphere only, not that of others. We mean to say, that these are the duties which seem to lie immediately before us to-day. Any cooperation which we may meet with, from any bodies of our fellow Christians, we trust we shall be ever ready candidly to acknowledge and gratefully to accept.

CAZNEAU PALFREY,  
J. T. G. NICHOLS,  
F. M. SABINE,  
J. JEWETT,

} *Committee on Churches.*

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

---

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, originally designed for the benefit of those unfortunate children who were deprived of the blessing of home education, the poor, the neglected, and by consequence the profligate, has become one of the most popular of our religious institutions, among which it is by general consent enrolled. There can be no doubt that, wisely managed, and kept in its subordinate place, used as an auxiliary, and not as a substitute for parental and other influence, it is adapted to do, and has done great good. This good it can do, however, only to the degree that it is made the source of genuine spiritual life; which is only saying in other words to the degree that there exists true spiritual life in those who direct and administer its instructions.

There seems to be a disposition to overestimate the mere organization and routine of a Sunday School; to ascribe an undue efficiency to the formal appliances of lessons and teachers, and prescribed exercises, without sufficient regard to the character and influence of those exercises, the qualifications of those teachers. The Sunday School has come to be regarded as part and parcel of our religious organizations—as necessary to them as a minister or a church. Any one who has attained a certain age, and whose character is unexceptionable, is thought fit to take part as teacher in its exercises, and the repetition of a few verses from the bible, or hymn, or lesson-book, without regard to the distinct inculcation of any religious doctrine, or truth, or the enforcement of any religious duty, too often constitutes (it is to be feared) its only benefit, if not its avowed purpose; and if, added to this, the annual Report represents a good attendance of teachers and scholars, such a school is thought to have answered its design.

But the utter insufficiency of all this in any just and large view of the mission of the Sunday School is too obvious to require discussion. The result of such a management, or rather of such a mismanagement, is not to be told in simple failure. As regards the true end of the Sunday School thus stated in the words of Dr. Channing—"to awaken the soul of the pupil, to bring his understanding, conscience and heart into earnest,



vigorous action in religious and moral truth, to excite and cherish in him Spiritual Life,"—it can scarcely be a question whether more harm than good is done by such a method. "I do not think," adds Dr. Channing, "that so much harm is done by giving error to a child, as by giving truth in a lifeless form. \* \* \* So great is my dread of tame, mechanical teaching, that I am sometimes almost tempted to question the utility of Sunday Schools."

But when the distinct purpose and offices of a Sunday School is to do the young a substantial service, nothing less than that of giving them sound Christian nurture; when its ministrations are in the hands of persons interested in the work, alive to its responsibility, and competent to its duties, and wisely adapted to this end; when the intercourse between teachers and scholars is a genuine, and not a merely formal one; when the former go to communicate, and the latter to receive (as they generally *will*, when the first condition is met,) a real benefit,—then it is, and then only, that the Sunday School rises into something truly dignified and valuable, and deserves to take rank among the important religious instrumentalities of the day.

We can but allude to two or three of the methods by which the Sunday School may best be enabled to work out its purpose successfully.

One of our correspondents remarks, "It seems to me that after all the talk on the Sabbath School, a real and thorough discussion of the subject is yet to be begun." The same correspondent suggests the query, (and it is one which must have occurred to many who have watched the results of the system,) whether "we are to assume that every parish must necessarily have a Sunday School; whether the condition of some parishes does not make some other form of religious instruction expedient." There is the case (to name no other) when, on account of the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of procuring competent teachers, the work of instruction is confided to incompetent ones. The question is entitled to consideration certainly, whether in such case it would not be better for the minister to take the business into his own hands; and to conduct in person a service adapted to the ages and understandings of the young people in his society—a service in which worship should be blended with instruction, as in the regular Sunday exercises.

In this connexion it may be suggested whether in all our Sunday Schools the introduction of something of this kind



would not be an improvement—whether it would not be well either for the minister, or some member of the society qualified for the work, to meet the elder pupils, and any others who might be disposed to attend such a service, and unite with them in a devotional exercise, singing, at the same time in the form of familiar address, carrying them through a systematic course of teaching, in which natural and revealed religion should have a share of attention,—doctrines, parables, scripture history, and exposition, each and all in their turn being made subjects of consideration. If, in connexion with such an arrangement, the hour usually devoted to the second service could be thus employed, and this service postponed to a later hour in the afternoon, or better still to the evening, would it not be a desirable change? If, besides, a room or rooms could be provided, equipped with suitable apparatus and decorations,—one, suited to this service, another where the younger children not old enough to be benefited by it could meet their teachers—might not much be hoped from such an arrangement? Would not the good which it might reasonably be expected to do compensate for the trouble and expense necessary to carry it into effect? At any event, is not the experiment (though it must incur some expense and trouble,) as well deserving a trial for *this* object as for that which looks only to the training of the mind in the branches of common school education?

But waiving this, and looking only at the system as now existing, what is necessary to its greater efficiency?

First of all, good Teachers.—This necessity is fundamental and indispensable. Where it is neglected, the Sunday School cannot be better than a failure as regards its true and vital ends. Whatever of ripe experience, wisdom, character, religious worth, a Christian Society may contain, should be enlisted in the service of the Sunday School. The young, so they be persons of thoughtfulness, earnestness of character, high aspiration, and of suitable culture, mindful of the nature and importance of the work, (never forgetting this latter qualification,) should be welcomed to a participation in it.—Otherwise, they are in their wrong place in a business of such a nature. One has well said, “No one can give, what he has not. We must first ourselves get the truth, before we shall be able to communicate it. No mere words of truth which we may read from a catechism, a manual, or the bible itself, will ever be effectual. ‘The letter killeth—the spirit only giveth life.’ There is all the difference between truth set forth in its

merely verbal signs and truth *realized*, that there is between the galvanic battery with its material apparatus lying coldly round, and the same machinery sparkling, darting electric shocks, and melting the hardest substances, as the insensible fluid runs through every jar and wire; or between the volcanic crater when it is ice, and when it is flame."—*C. A. Bartol*.

Next to good teachers, the Sunday School demands a good System. The special business of the Sunday School is to teach the science and the practice of right living,—in other words of the Christian religion; to superinduce on the culture of the day school, which looks mainly to the mind, that of the heart, conscience, character; in a word, to carry on, in its most essential respect, the training of the human being; to supply that without which all the rest would be comparatively useless. This being the theory of the Sunday School, it implies, of course, the necessity that its *teachings* be, (as in the schools where the mind is trained in other knowledge,) systematic and thorough; such as shall both impart valuable truth, and in a form that shall give it a direct and decided effect on character and life. In order to the realization of its purpose, a large amount of positive knowledge is to be communicated, and of positive religious and spiritual impulse to be supplied. Its purpose is to qualify its pupils for the stern discipline of life. This *discipline* is real and hard enough; the culture must be real, earnest, deep, which shall give anything like an adequate preparation for it. It must not play on the surface, but go down to the root of the matter. The foundations of the spiritual edifice must be laid deeply, and the building fitly framed and compacted together. Our Sunday Schools have done much good, directly and incidentally; but can their highest purpose be secured, till they have better recognised and embodied the laws which belong to all education, alike in secular and religious knowledge, by adopting a more systematic and thorough course of training, such a training in their special department, as our day schools furnish in theirs?

Added to good teachers and a good system, we need next good Books, good Manuals. This want has been recognised, in the series which has recently been published, and which is in use in most of our Sunday Schools. The preparation of such a series is in itself to be welcomed as a hopeful indication, as an attempt to meet what was universally felt to be a peremptory want. It is to be rejoiced in yet more because of the success with which the work has been accomplished.

The subjects embraced in the series leave nothing essen-

tial to be desired to expect an exhaustive treatment of such subjects, in such a course, would be expecting altogether too much. It is as much as can be reasonably asked, if the pupils who have been thoroughly carried through it are well grounded in the themes which it presents; if it *suggests* what it does not fully supply; if teachers and scholars are the better prepared by its use for a fresher appreciation of the interesting and important topics which it embodies. We may look to the introduction of these valuable books as the beginning of a new and better era in the history of the Sunday School.

Before dismissing the subject of books we are led to say a word about Libraries, now generally regarded as an indispensable part of a Sunday School apparatus.

It is well that a means of benefiting the young, and so useful and attractive as that of reading, should be connected with the Sunday School; that in view of the important influence exerted upon them through this instrumentality, the selection and distribution of these books should be under the oversight of their religious teachers.

But there are practical difficulties connected with the subject, which all who are conversant with the detail of Sunday School management must have experienced. Some of these have to do with the subject-matter of these libraries, others with the customary mode of managing them. It is a question deserving serious consideration, whether much of the matter that finds a place in our Sunday School libraries, is not of a description which, to say the least, does very little to help on the moral and religious education of the young; if too many of the volumes which compose it are not sought after and read solely because of the interest which they excite as stories, possessing, in fact, no higher value than what is derived from this source, and helping to form and strengthen that taste for light reading which certainly stands in need of no such reinforcement. Does not the constant demand for books of this description (which the annual re-stocking of our Sunday School libraries produces, and which the greedy appetite of their juvenile readers makes necessary) does it not go to encourage the multiplication of works of this class—works, many of them, whose highest recommendation is that they can do no particular harm? We make no war upon fiction, as such; but only insist in its being made the vehicle of some decided moral and religious impression. Should we not demand of the books which we put into the hands of the young,



at least of those which issue from our Sunday School libraries, that they do this?

We cannot close our Report without allusion to a topic, the connexion of which with the general one we have had under discussion is most intimate, and indeed vital. "Who," asks Mrs. Hall, "that has ever been connected with a Sunday School, has not discovered to his sorrow that absolutely the mountain in his path, was the want of *co-operation at home*—nay, even a positively counteracting influence at home?" What other influence in point of strength and permanency of impression is to be compared with this of parental? What other, whether of the Sabbath School, or any other can succeed, in the best meaning of success, without its help?

"A child" says Mr. Bartol, "may be said to be *taught*, when in words we clearly convey to his mind any truth, or enjoin upon his conscience any precept. He is *trained*, when we ourselves so pass before him in practical illustration of the truth and precept, that he is drawn along after us in the same way." Now this last, this all important training, is just the work which the parent must do; and it is a work which he is doing and must do, whether he will or not. It is the inevitable result of the parental and filial relations. There is the constantly operating influence of a parent's example, conversation, habits. These are doing their silent and effectual work, and with all the potency which they derive from the inherent authority and influence of the parental relation. No matter though the parent may think himself quit of all such responsibility, and flatter himself that the business is in other hands; his every act, and word, and manifested feeling has made its mark in the plastic nature of his child. He is imprinting himself on his susceptible soul.

But in addition to this, there is direct moral and religious teaching. How can this be overlooked or given up entirely to others by any parent who considers that no lessons carry with them such authority, or exert so hallowed an influence on the life, as those which are enforced by the lips of a good parent? Our own experience, the biographies of great and good men, abound with illustrations of the power which through life has attended the remembrance of the infantile prayer taught by a good mother, and remind us how the counsels and instructions received from her, have come to the salvation of the soul in its hours of special trial and danger. This influence comes to us amid the temptations and cares of busy life, surrounded with

all sacred associations and memories, bringing tears to the eyes, and peace to the heart.

We will conclude these remarks with a single consideration commending itself with special force to the parent, and not without its force to the Sabbath School Teacher, as a motive to the faithful fulfilment of his work.

Few thoughtful persons have reached adult age, probably, who have not had (though they may not have expressed) the wish, "O that I could live my life over again; that with all my present light and knowledge, and experience, I could go back to childhood and once more enjoy the opportunities now gone forever! To how much better purpose would I live! How much more for myself, for my family, for my fellow men would I accomplish! To what higher attainments in knowledge and virtue would I reach; to what different ends labor; how much deeper and truer happiness would I secure!

Now the subject we have been considering reminds us of the nearest approach that can be made to the realization of this wish. We can live our lives over again in a very important sense, in the young, in our children. Through the wise and faithful oversight of the formative years of their existence, we can use the experience we have acquired, in making and doing something better. In their training we can avoid the mistakes which injured us; supply the deficiencies which have caused us so much suffering; and by pointing out, and aiding them to escape the follies and sins which have marred and dwarfed our characters, can help them to avoid a similar fate.

Thus is the natural claim of the child to a training in the way in which he should go, reinforced by the consideration, that in making its demands, we are at once conferring the greatest blessing on him, and doing something to atone for our individual short comings; to give to earth and to Heaven what we have failed to give in our own lives and labors; and so to win some better title to human and to Divine regard.

H. F. EDES,	}	<i>Committee on Sunday Schools.</i>
T. D. HOWARD,		
G. W. BOURNE,		
J. S. CUSHING,		

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS.

---

THE Committee on Missions, having had no funds at their disposal, during the year which is about to close, and consequently no means for conducting Missionary operations, are able to make no report of any thing that has been actually accomplished, and of very little that has even been attempted. They have believed, indeed, that to make attempts which must necessarily be abandoned, would be worse than useless; and that it would be very much better to leave things for the present as they are, than to excite hopes and expectations which would be sure to be disappointed. At this time, therefore, they can do nothing more than to take a general and cursory survey of the field of missionary labor, state briefly what ought to be done, and what under present circumstances can or cannot be done, and offer such suggestions as may appear to them important, so far as relates to efficient and successful action hereafter. They have made inquiries and sought information in various quarters, and have in this way endeavored to prepare themselves for future operations, if they have done nothing more.

Perhaps at no period has the course of liberal Christianity in the form in which we hold it, been more prosperous and promising within the limits of our state, than it is to-day. Our existing Churches are generally in a healthful condition, are supplied with faithful and devoted pastors, and afford indications of permanency and increasing strength; and there are several localities which have not as yet been occupied by any preacher of our denomination, where Churches of our faith will undoubtedly be established within no very distant period. It is true that in some places of greater or less importance, where in former years, the effort was made to sustain Unitarian worship, unexpected difficulties arose, and the experiment failed. But it is not to be argued from any such cause as this, that Unitarianism is on the wane. Such results occur in other denominations as well as our own, and are sometimes to be expected. But upon the whole, success is more frequent than failure, and losses at one point are more than made up at another.



Most of our Churches have originated from small beginnings, and have been sustained at first by a few individuals who have been liberal to the full extent of their ability. In this "day of small things," the loss of one or two prominent members is sufficient to change the aspect of things entirely. Thus a very slight obstruction is sufficient to turn the course of the rill at its beginning, while the skill and power of man are altogether inadequate to arrest its progress, when once it has swollen to a mighty river. Thus an edifice may be made to rest securely on a very few supports; but the smaller the number, the greater will be the hazard when one is removed from its place. Death has frequently made its inroads amongst us, and taken away pillar after pillar from our religious body. Such losses can only be made good by the addition of others. They occur, however, in all denominations alike, and are in no respect peculiar to ourselves. But there is another cause: the friends and supporters of our faith are for the most part active, and intelligent men of business, who find it necessary to change their places of residence as business calls them. The Churches which they leave must of necessity feel their loss; and in some cases the burden becomes, in consequence of it, too onerous for those who remain. But the denomination suffers no loss on account of these changes. They go to strengthen other Churches; or what is perhaps still better, to diffuse the leaven of liberal principles through other communities, and form a nucleus around which new congregations can be gathered.

The Committee earnestly hope that whatever Churches may have suffered in this way, will still hold on with good courage, and exert themselves more strenuously if need be, to sustain the ordinances of religion among them, and to preserve in its purity what we regard as in all fundamental points, "The faith once delivered to the saints;" and they hope that those which for a time have been suspended, will soon be revived in such a manner as will establish their permanency.

All over the State, in nearly all of its principal towns and in very many of its smaller ones, professed Unitarians are to be found; as well as many others, who if they were acquainted with the doctrine and knew what to call themselves, would gladly enroll themselves in the number. They are dissatisfied with such preaching as they are accustomed to hear, and they are unable to procure such preaching as they would like; and the consequence is, that a large portion of them have no connection with any Church or denomination whatever. They are too

intelligent to listen with profit and pleasure to men of less than ordinary ability ; and they are too few in number, and too limited in their resources, to render an adequate support to such men as they need. In cases of this kind, the question very naturally arises, what is to be done ? The committee are able to perceive, at present, but this one alternative, either to leave them entirely to themselves, with only such occasional aid, in the way of preachers and books, as we may be able to send them, or to organize them into "unparochial churches," as recognized in the Constitution of this Association ; and then to adopt, with perhaps some modifications, the system of circuit preaching which exists among the Methodists. This is the course which the committee would recommend where it is practicable ; and it is believed that in many cases, it would be attended with very beneficent results. It is believed that in various parts of the State, a sufficient number of places may be found in close proximity to each other, which, by combining their means and dividing the services, would be able to employ a good preacher, and afford him a competent support for the whole of his time, without drawing upon the funds of the Association at all, except merely at starting. And it is also believed that pious and capable young men, coming out from our Theological Schools, with few sermons and with little practical knowledge of the duties of their profession, could hardly find a more profitable field of labor for one or two years, than such as would be thus afforded.

Several years ago an effort was made to employ missionaries in this State, and at our request, the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association voted to send us one. The effort, however, failed, because no suitable person could be found to engage in the work. The same difficulty still exists. Inquiries have been made in different quarters to ascertain whether this pressing want can soon be supplied ; and the answer is the same as before. Meadville has no man to engage in this work ; Cambridge has none ; and the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association knows of none. It is possible that some of our settled ministers may be able to leave their parishes, occasionally, and for short excursions, if they can have their own pulpits supplied ; but it is obvious that nothing of this kind will be able to reach the extent of our wants ; and it would seem to be a very questionable policy to commence a movement of this kind with the certainty that it must be abandoned in the end.

As the only practical expedient remaining at the present

time, under these circumstances, a plan is maturing for the employment of Colporteurs throughout the State, in the circulation and sale of books and periodicals. If there can be a concert of action in relation to this matter between the Association in Boston and our own, though we may not be able to accomplish all that we should desire, there can be no reasonable doubt but that good results may be obtained.

We do not wish to make aggressions upon other denominations; but we wish to become fellow laborers with them, in reclaiming men from sin, and in arresting the evil tendencies of the times. We wish to perform our own work in our own way, and not to destroy that of others. There is labor enough for all. The field is broad enough for all. Let the only contention be in regard to the question, "who shall perform their work the best." There is a common Christianity which underlies all creeds; there are common objects which should be placed high above all sectarian and party aims. We would not forget these facts; we would not lose sight of these truths in any efforts which we may be disposed to make for the promotion of denominational interests. We would rather that the denomination should suffer, and its numbers diminish, than that religion should decline. We would rather that piety and morality should prevail, than that a sect should triumph. We would prefer that Christian Institutions should be sustained, even should it be in a form distinct from our own.

A. D. WHEELER,	}	<i>Committee on Missions.</i>
E. J. GERRY,		
T. S. LATHROP,		
E. H. NEAL,		
C. SPAULDING,		

THE Committee on Missions, in connection with their Report, submit the following letter from the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association :

*Office of A. U. A., Boston, August 9, 1853.*

REV. MR. WHEELER :

DEAR SIR :—Your excellent letter of July 30 has remained unanswered until now, because I wished to read it to our Executive Committee before I attempted a reply. A meeting of that Committee was held yesterday, and your letter was read. It was voted to refer its consideration to a sub-committee of our Board, who have in consideration some plans with refer-



ence to the employment of Colporteurs. That sub-committee consists of the Secretary of the A. U. A., and Messrs. Alger and Lincoln.

We have had one meeting for conference, and it is evident that we shall not come to a consideration of the expediency of employing Colporteurs for several weeks, because the question is with us dependant upon another we are considering, viz : the practicability of procuring one cheap volume of 450 pages, to contain Dr. Channing's ablest religious works, to be sold say at 50 cents by colporteurs.

At present, the prospect is, that we shall be entirely successful in this plan ; and if so, we shall be ready as soon as these volumes are furnished to us, to enter into arrangements for the employment of Colporteurs.

Looking now to the general subject of the wants of your State, it strikes me, that, in the present impossibility of procuring *preachers*, the next best thing we can do is to employ a travelling *book-agent* or *colporteur*, who, with supplies of all our best publications, and especially of the volume of select works referred to, shall go to the towns and villages of Maine which offer the most encouragement for his success, to scatter as extensively as possible the earnest words of our able writers, among the living and the dead. One advantage such an agent would have over a preacher, he could place books in the hands of ministers and laymen of other denominations, many of whom might receive the select volume of Channing, and such works as 'Sears on Regeneration,' 'Peabody's Lectures,' &c. After all, it is our own fresh, earnest, and hopeful religious LITERATURE, working in the *general mind of the Country*, that is accomplishing the best results to which we can point, and measures calculated to help this work onward, deserve and demand our fostering care. A book, quietly circulated in a neighborhood, awakens no hostility, builds up no opposing influences, makes no change in the outside appearance of society ; but here and there it gives a new direction to thought, leads one man to inquire, softens the prejudices of another, saves a third from doubt and infidelity, and in a little while the harvest of all this good seed is seen in preachers proclaiming our views of the truth, and in whole societies ripe for our interpretations of the word of Christ. At present we have no preachers to act as missionaries. This is the simple fact, we must accept it, and do the next best thing. Are there no laymen we can employ, men of good address, of integrity, activity, enterprise, and interest in this work ? Can we not unite

on some plan of securing to the right man, when we have found him, say two or three hundred dollars a year, as a sure and certain compensation, and then allow him a certain *percentage* on every book he sells, on every subscriber he obtains to our periodicals, on every annual or life member to the Association?

Now this plan seems to me to be feasible, entirely within our ability, and to hold out the promise of eminent success. I am not as yet authorized to speak with any authority, but I feel quite confident that the A. U. A. would unite with the Maine Convention in sustaining this work. The expense and hazard could not be much, and why should we not therefore resolve that we will at once set about it? The first thing of course is to get the right man. Let every minister look round in his parish, and every layman in his circle of acquaintance, and let all make such suggestions as they may have to offer, to a committee appointed for this purpose. Let the details be so arranged as to secure a competent man, by the hope of an income of eight or ten hundred dollars a year. Let us put our hands to this enterprise with some courage and faith, and take hold of it *at once*, and not be always talking about what we mean to do. I see that this last sentence contains something of a *reflection*, but I mean it for us here in Massachusetts, not you in Maine, for your Association has been too recently formed to do as much talking as ours.

I did not mean to indite so long an epistle, but have been carried on by my hope that now something will be *done*.

Very truly and dearly yours,

HENRY A. MILES.

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS.

---

THE operations of the Committee on Publications relate to such works already printed as this Association may wish to circulate, and such as the Association may procure to be written and shall publish on its own account.

With respect to books and tracts already published, your Committee have made arrangements with some publishers, and presume they can be made with all, by which books will be sent to our depositories, for sale or distribution, with the understanding that we remit the proceeds of those that are sold, and have the liberty of returning those that remain long unsold. Your Committee recommend and request that a Depository be established and an agent employed in every place where one of our Churches exists, and that the agent procure and keep such books as, in the judgment of the minister of the place, are best suited for distribution in his neighborhood. It will be the duty of the Committee on Publications to make arrangements with publishers, and to notify agents at what places books may be procured. It is desirable that the existence of the depository should be kept in the recollection of the associated Churches, and that an advertisement should be made of the books to be obtained from it.

It is to be presumed that the greater part of the books will be sold, and that this department of the distribution of books may be conducted, and a great number of valuable works put in circulation, without any outlay of the funds of the Association. Our plan ought however to embrace a provision for gratuitous distribution. Occasions will occur when it will be desirable to give one of our books to an inquirer who wishes to be informed of our peculiar views. Your Committee recommend that such a donation be made, at the expense of the Association, whenever, in the judgment of the minister, it is thought expedient.

In the work which this Association undertakes of defending and explaining Unitarian views of Christianity in this State, it will become desirable to furnish tracts and small works, re-



ports or discussions of particular topics, which may be assigned by this Committee to competent writers, either among ourselves or without the State, and expressly adapted to the wants and state of feeling in our own community. This will be a most important sphere of operation; and to this object a considerable portion of the funds of the Association will hereafter be appropriated, according to the charge in their management suggested by the Executive Board.

The sermon on the Birthright Church, the last labor of our lamented brother, the late Pastor of the Church in Augusta, which has awakened a general and deep interest in our Churches, is now at the disposal of this Association. In the opinion of your Committee, a large and cheap edition of it should be printed, and widely disseminated through the State. We are informed that other discourses on kindred subjects were left by Mr. Judd in a condition ready for the press, and sufficient to form a volume. It would be at the same time rendering a service to the cause of religion, and a just tribute to the memory of our brother, to publish them in the name of this Association which was so dear to his heart.

CAZNEAU PALFREY,  
J. H. ALLEN,  
M. W. WILLIS,  
AMOS NOURSE,  
EDWARD FENNO,

} *Committee*  
} *on Publications.*

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ART.

---

As a report upon the subject which has been assigned to me, will doubtless be regarded by many as a novel thing in the way of church action ; it may seem desirable to begin with a word of explanation.

It is well known that, in the past ages of Christian history, sacred architecture and painting have played a conspicuous part, and still have a vast influence over the largest and most powerful division of the Christian Church. Rome, at this moment, finds the right arm of her strength in the rich treasures of art, which fifty generations have gathered about her altars ; she rules the cultured minds of Europe by the majesty of her cathedrals more than by any other force. What would be the weight of her decrees in council, what would be the charm of her liturgy muttered in an unknown tongue, what the efficacy of her creed, what the awe of her ceremonial, without these lofty and graceful structures, venerable with age, inlaid with a Mosaic of historical and holy associations, and adorned with every costly and symbolic embellishment, to prop them up, lend them dignity, and enforce them ? The Roman Church, as many Protestants think, has a burdensome ritual, a preposterous creed, and very questionable traditions ; but the intellectual forces of even this nineteenth century cannot reach them with effect. No weapon of argument can pierce them, because they are guarded and entrenched by Abbeys, Convents, and Cathedrals made impressive and grand by their magnitude and the interior distribution of light, made solemn by their antiquity, and surpassingly beautiful by elaborate art ; by paintings and sculpture, by majestic towers, and spires that mount upward into the clouds. The papal forms, creed, and traditions, remain uninterrupted from one generation to another, since they are all interwoven with these fair fabrics, which give them support, and enclose them with barriers against which protestant reason and protestant scripture beat in vain.

Art, then, it is evident, has power. It has power to prop and perpetuate even the grossest superstition and idolatry, as is seen in all civilized Pagan lands ; and as was abundantly manifest in ancient Rome by the reluctance with which many

of the early converts to Christianity turned away from the proud temples of that eternal city into Christian conventicles, and the humble places of the new worship. But if art has power, it may be asked why its aid may not be called in to promote the pure religion of the Gospels? Why may not sacred art be conciliated to the ends of protestant worship? Why may not we have its inspiration and assistance, in some humble degree at least, in our own meek temples, and amidst our purer faith, and simpler forms of the Sanctuary?

In proposing a better organization of our religious faith in this State, and planning for the development of freer and higher forms of Church life, it was thought that something might be profitably attempted in this direction. It seemed that something might be done in the way of improving our style of church architecture, and of exalting our notions as to the importance of the church edifice, and the respect and care due to it, as the place of our most sacred meditations. It was hoped that hints might be afforded in the discussion of this subject, which would guide to the more judicious expenditure of money in the building of churches; to greater care in selecting the site, and the material; greater attention to the established principles of correct taste, of architectural design, and architectural proportions. It was thought, also, that in this way the minds of the people might be led to bestow more attention on the inside finish and embellishment; to consult more both for convenience and fitness in the arrangement of the several parts, as the height, form, and position of the pulpit; the construction and furnishing of the pews; the plan and placing of the galleries; the proper situation of the organ and choir; the arranging of the communion table and font.

In this connexion the question might be considered, whether paintings might be placed upon the walls, especially Scripture pieces,—scenes from the Old and New Testament, or from the Savior's parables; whether mural monuments are fitting ornaments in a church; or sculpture, such as heads and busts of the Apostles, and of eminent Confessors and Martyrs of the Christian faith in later ages; and again, whether fresh flowers, those silent symbols of the divine love, and matchless expressions of the divine art, are ever an intrusion, or an incongruity in the house of God.

Church Music would be still another subject which might command more of our interest. What style is best suited to protestant worship and to awaken the true sentiments of devotion? Shall we have chants and jubilant anthems, or hymns



alone? What can be said of congregational singing? What tunes generally give the best devotional effects to the pious sentiments of the hymn? How shall this important part of the service be made to contribute most directly and effectively to the grand purposes of religious worship?

What precisely can be done among us to advance these matters pertaining to church art, cannot yet be determined. There is one thing, however, which we have the power to do; and that is, to bring all these points up before the churches at our annual conventions, for conference and debate. We can talk together of these things. We may learn to think right about them, and thus make the preparation for right action whenever the time comes.

The argument from religious structures found on every part of the globe, here in magnificent ruins, and there in magnificent preservation, for the natural religion of the human heart, is a most stupendous argument. It is irresistible and overwhelming. It is illustrated with equal force by the thousand forms of idolatry which have existed in all Pagan ages, and still exist, under the teachings of Moses, Christ, and Mohammed. Idolatry shows just as clearly the action of the religious sentiment, as the highest forms of Christian worship.

There is a natural religion of the human heart. It belongs to the deepest and strongest elements of man's nature. All forms of religion have the same sub-basis. They are all united at their roots, although as soon as above ground, they branch off in opposite directions. That man is a religious being, that he was made for religion by his Creator, is a fact, which has the Temple testimony, alike of the remotest antiquity, and of modern times; of the most barbarous nations, and of the most cultured people. It is a testimony given with equal explicitness by Pagan Asia, and Christian Europe; with equal force by Pagoda, Mosque, Synagogue, and Church. It is a testimony proclaimed from every sacred edifice that the earth bears, or ever has borne upon its surface; from the unchiseled monolith erected to God by the Patriarch Jacob, on the spot where he had slept and dreamed; from the rough altars of druidical worship yet standing against the ravages of time; from the solemn and massive temples of Egypt, built in heavy and sombre architecture along the Nile, not for an age, but for eternity; from the graceful temples of Greece, reared with the highest perfection of architectural design, and finished in the highest forms of classic taste and beauty; from the renowned Pantheon of ancient Rome,—from this last with a

double significance, since it speaks at once for the Pagan world, through its original dedication to Jupiter the Father of all the Gods, and for the Christian ages, by its subsequent dedication to the One Eternal Spirit in the name of the Virgin Mary and all the Martyrs. The same testimony is borne by the vast Cathedral of St. Peter, built at the expense of the whole Roman world; the most magnificent and gorgeous structure on earth. It is borne by the Gothic fanes both ancient and modern, illustrating every triumph and perfection of sacred art, everywhere scattered over the face of Europe. It is borne with no less weight by the thousands of chapels, and humble edifices of church worship in our own country, and throughout all protestant lands. It is a testimony which no man can gainsay, or resist. It is an argument written, as if by the finger of God, in the most legible and luminous characters on every part of the earth, and preserved in the most enduring monuments that human hands can rear. It is an argument cemented in the religious history of all past time, and forever immovable by any power of Man.

But as it is clear that religion belongs to the native elements of the human soul, so we may always find it seeking expression in outward forms, and in structures solemnly devoted to the object of adoration. The history of Sacred Art is but the history of the action of this sentiment, seeking its material embodiment in wood and stone, and in the creations of genius. We find it at work far back in the twilight periods of human history. Noah had scarcely gone forth from the ark, when he "builded an altar unto the Lord," and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. Abraham built an altar unto the Lord to commemorate a blessed promise. Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai erects a stone circle consisting of twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel, perhaps the earliest form of a religious temple.\*

In process of time the Mosaic tabernacle was built, and placed in the midst of the Hebrew camp, containing the ark of the covenant, and the two portable altars. The magnificent temple of Solomon was constructed after the same model, a thousand years before the Christian era, to signalize the piety of the Jewish people in its massive proportions and costly embellishments. Historians tell us, that no less than forty-six

\* The altar which Moses built is, as some writers think, the prototype of the famous Celtic Temple on Salisbury Plains, called Stonehenge, accounted the oldest architectural monument in England.

thousand tons of gold and silver were wrought into this stupendous fabric of antiquity.

Looking beyond the narrow boundaries of Palestine, we find the religious sentiment actively at work in the same direction, as yet in its rude, benighted state, without power to lift itself into the atmosphere of a pure theism, or a Christian spirituality.

In Babylon was the temple of Jupiter Belus or the Sun, more than a thousand years older than the temple of Solomon. In Egypt a religious structure is found nearly contemporaneous with that of Babylon, the temple of Karnac in ancient Thebes, one of prodigious magnitude, being not less than a mile and a half in circumference. This edifice illustrates the sacred architecture of the Egyptians, which is characterized by the boldness and magnitude of its parts, and the almost monotonous uniformity of design. To these we may add the Temples of Jugernaut, in India. Go into Greece and Rome, and amidst the magnificence of their matchless and wondrous structures, you find the same thing made most strikingly apparent. Pierce through the desert to Palmyra, and you will find a repetition of proof. In China, in Christian Europe, and in this Western world, and everywhere, it is the same.

The question then arises, what shall be the type of the Church edifice? Is there any universal form, or mould, to which every age must conform; or shall each nation, each age, each sect, each congregation of worshipers, seek its own adaptations, and create its own style?

That church architecture has never had any exact, unvarying, universal type, but has changed in some of its characteristic features from age to age, according to the prevalent taste and temper of the times. Writers upon church art mark the great leading transitions by the terms Byzantine, Saxon, Lombard, Norman, and Italian. Before the reign of Constantine, in the ages of Christian persecution, when the church was struggling with principalities and powers, the church edifice was, no doubt, very humble in its architecture, amounting, sometimes, to no more than a subterranean passage. Owing to the comparative poverty of the church, both in numbers and wealth, and also to the destructive violence of a persecution that was meant to be exterminating.

Upon the accession of Constantine, church architecture began to assume a permanent shape. This Christian Emperor, says a modern historian, "Set his whole mind upon such things as would establish Christianity on a firm footing, and with dignity began to erect churches, not only sumptuous



ones, but adorning them with goodly and gorgeous monuments." He first used, for churches, the Basilica, or hall of justice of the ancient Romans, which had an oblong interior, divided in its width into three divisions, by two rows of columns. To these halls, or exchanges, was added a transept, now first adopted, to give the form of a cross. This became the general plan, or form, for Christian churches throughout many succeeding generations. After Constantine had removed the seat of his empire to Byzantium, and the Northern invaders had descended upon Rome, the work of demolition was commenced upon the churches which had been built by this emperor, and they were most of them destroyed. From the ruins of the Basilican churches of Constantine's reign, there grew up a kind of church architecture, which writers upon this subject describe as "barbarous, rustic and hybrid," and which they trace to the Goths and semi-Goths. From this period the style of architecture was constantly varying for eight hundred years, with the successive incursions of the various tribes that inundated Italy, and with the consequent continual change of architectural taste and ideas. The present wonderful Norman and Gothic structures, to be found all over England and the Continent have, at length, resulted from these changes of taste, and these revolutions of empire.\*

We see from the facts above stated, that different ages have adopted different styles of church architecture, to suit the convenience, the changing taste, and altered condition of the times. Every age brings its peculiar ideas, necessities, and conditions. The Christian world is now divided and subdivided into sects. These various sects worship by different creeds, and in the use of divers forms. A difference of ritual creates a difference of demand as to the form and arrangements of the church building. Catholic worship and Puritan worship are not equally adapted to the same form and style of edifice. So that our Christian ideas, our creeds, and our formularies, must give shape very much, in these times, to our sacred structures.

\* It ought to be observed that the architecture of the Goths is not to be confounded with what is now called Gothic architecture. The appellation Gothic when applied to architecture in modern times, and in its restricted sense, simply denotes those styles in which the pointed arch prevails. "The use of the term Gothic," says Bloxham, appeared in England about the close of the seventeenth century, when it was employed by such writers as Evelyn and Wren, as an epithet intended to convey a feeling of disesteem for the structures of medieval architecture, which even the master mind of Wren was unable to appreciate. It has since been generally followed."

This leads to the inquiry, what is the true form of Protestant Architecture? Or, to come nearer home, and to a more practical point, what is the true type of Congregational Architecture? What kind of a house of worship, and what aids and embellishments, are best suited to the religious wants, the religious taste, means, and convenience of our Christian assemblies here in the towns and villages of New England? This, after all, is the great practical point which is presented for consideration in our discussions concerning church art.

I would say in the first place, that in planning for a New England Congregational Church building, there should be no aspiration for the Grecian Temple or the Gothic Cathedral, though both of these styles are eminently perfect when completely carried out. I suppose the Grecian Temple, such as once adorned Athens, and other cities of Greece, was the most faultless piece of architecture in its finish and proportions, that the human hand ever fashioned, or the human mind ever conceived. And we can easily enter into the enthusiasm of those ardent admirers of the Gothic style, as exhibited in a finished cathedral, who look upon it as the very poetry of architecture—who regard every great and perfect cathedral as a “great religious epic,” its storied windows, each of which “shoots down a stained and shadowy stream of light,” as so many cantos of the loftiest poetry of the Christian faith; every statue in its niches as an historical episode; every exquisite canopy, every heaven-seeking turret, every fair pendant, or crocketed finial, as a beautiful symbol, presenting to the eye the loveliest revelations of nature,

“In strange materials, and an unknown mode.”

All such enthusiasm may be easily comprehended in one of artistic taste, vivid imagination, and cultured perceptions. There can be no dispute that a Grecian Temple, or a Gothic Cathedral, in its perfection, is a most admirable and graceful triumph of art, a marvelous realization of human genius and lofty conception. And well would it be for the general taste and pleasure, if such specimens of architecture could be placed in every town and city of the United States. They would, indeed, be noble objects for the eye to rest upon, in frequent and familiar contemplation. The love of the grand and beautiful would be gratified thereby, and the common taste exalted. But in seeking an edifice for religious and Christian uses, we should attend to what is possible, and to what is fit, as well as to what might be in some cases very desirable.

It is impossible to have the Grecian Temple here in New England, even if we would; and there are objections to its form for a Church, even if a possibility. In the first place, it is too costly when carried out to perfection both in proportion and material, and unless there is something above a cheap imitation, the beauty and effect are lost. In the second place, the form of the Grecian Temple gives no place for either tower or steeple; and every church should have a spire, or at least a tower and belfry. The spire is one of the best of ornaments, and the bell tower is a necessity, or certainly a great convenience.

On the other hand, the Cathedral form is objectionable on account of the expense it would involve to carry it out properly; and then, on account of the transept which is not needed, and some other parts which would be useless, such as a spacious chancel and side chapels. But the great objection is the impossibility of commanding that prodigious extent, immense height, wonderful lightness and variety of forms which are characteristic of the Gothic, and without which, it produces none of its legitimate effects. The small, shingle, gingerbread cathedrals of Italian and Gothic forms, which are becoming so common in every village, are absurdities and intrusions. Their pretension would be offensive, if it were not ludicrous.

In building a Church for Protestant Congregational worship here among us, the cost should first be counted, then an artist should be applied to, who has made church architecture a study, and the best structure possible secured for the means in hand. The material should be brick or stone, whenever to be had, especially in large towns, because such material gives an aspect of stability, and is more safe than wood.

The form should be oblong, which is almost universal; this is the form of religious edifices in all ages. The old Puritan Church, indeed, was not unfrequently a square, with a steeple running up from the pyramidal roof; and in ancient times, Churches were sometimes built in the form of an octagon, and sometimes with a circular interior. But what is called the nave,\* that is, the main body of the Church, was with very few exceptions, oblong. And this has been established by the eternal laws of convenience and beauty.

There should be no dome or side galleries, for both interrupt the voice of the preacher; and besides, the side walls must be clear, for the embellishments of Sacred Art, frescoes,

\* From *Naos*, temple.



paintings, and sculpture. The windows should be long, with either the semi-circular or pointed arch, and open to the admission of light; and the glass without paint or stain. A "dim religious light" belongs to the Gothic Cathedral, if anywhere, and is desirable only in places exclusively for devotion; it is suited alone to increase the effect of liturgical services. In a Congregational Church of the present day, we like to see distinctly where we are and who is addressing us, without, however, a glare of light. For preaching I take to be the chief point of interest and edification in the Protestant Congregational service. The sermon is certainly the leading and most effective part of the public worship with us in New England, and it is so by good right and perfect propriety. Everything should be avoided in church architecture, which in the slightest degree embarrasses the effect of this, for preaching the gospel is the principal thing.

The pulpit should be low, bringing the preacher nearer to the congregation, and the floor should not be a flat level, but raised gradually as you approach the door. The Choir should be lower down than usual, but not so as to depress the entrance where there is a broad aisle. The Church should be furnished throughout, every part alike, so that all on the inside shall seem to be in perfect keeping. There should be a large Communion Table, and ample space about it. There should always be a vestry, and, where convenient, a back entrance to the pulpit.

The walls might be adorned with sacred art, whenever high specimens could be obtained; but none would be far better than any ordinary achievements of skill. Religious lessons may be forcibly addressed to the mind through the eye, by Christian devices, by works of the pencil and the chisel; and we should disdain no influence which exalts the taste, and makes the heart more holy. Flowers are appropriate everywhere, and especially where the soul seeks symbols of images of the divine love, and is striving to come into harmony with the spirit and author of all beauty.

The Church should be thoroughly ventilated, and kept in the most complete repair. Thus the house of religious worship should be made agreeable by every convenience and adaptation, and attractive by every accessory of art within reach of the worshippers' means in its locality. It should be elevated and open to the view, its spire should point far up into the heavens, and its proportions be as faultless as art can make them; and why may it not be surmounted by a Cross? The

whole structure, whether large or small, should be in perfect keeping with itself, and with the grand and holy objects for which it was reared; it should be the loved and consecrated place of prayer, of righteous resolve, and spiritual meditation. To the humble and devout soul of the worshiper it should be indeed "the house of God, and the gate of Heaven."

Church Music, both in its kind and style of execution, should be adapted to promote religious feeling; there should be heart in it; there should be religious sentiment in it; there should be simplicity in it; there should be that which will touch and inspire the soul of devotion. Religious Music should have the utmost freedom and variety. Pious emotion demands the widest compass of the scale. The notes may be cheerful, and warble sometimes, like the birds in Milton's hymn,

"That singing, up to heaven-gate ascend."

The pieces performed in ordinary worship should generally be short, and well adapted to the nature of the service. We can well spare from our churches the air and style of the opera. We should not ask always for novelty, but most often for ancient, approved, and appropriate tunes. We could spare from the service protracted voluntaries at the commencement of worship, even when great skill presides at the organ. These consume time, and the effect seems too much like listening to a fine performance where our sole aim should be worship. All ought to take a more active and attentive interest in this part of our worship. We ought to put aside all whimsical criticism when we enter the church, and do our utmost to help on the service in a kindly spirit and a receptive mood of mind. In the songs of praise we should endeavor to feel that we are a part of the choir, identifying ourselves with it. We ought to be alive to adoration, as if all were alike touched by the divine breath, and were all uttering forth in unison, and from the deep recesses of the heart that tribute of praise which the spirit of God can alone inspire, to whom alone such tribute is due.

R. P. CUTLER,	} Committee
J. A. SWAN,	
O. J. FERNALD,	
J. W. TUFTS,	
H. V. BARTOL,	
	on Church Art.

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE YEAR 1853-4.

- President.* WILLIAM G. CROSBY, *Belfast.*  
*Vice Presidents.* I. NICHOLS, D. D., *Portland.*  
 J. H. WILLIAMS, *Augusta.*  
 J. C. NOYES, *Portland.*  
*Secretary,* M. W. WILLIS, *Bath.*  
*Treasurer,* EDWARD FENNO, *Augusta.*  
*Executive Board,* JOSEPH H. ALLEN, *Bangor.*  
 RUFUS P. CUTLER, *Portland.*  
 A. D. WHEELER, *Brunswick.*  
 DANIEL KILBY, *Eastport.*  
 THOMAS CHADWICK, *Portland.*

BUSINESS COMMITTEES.

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>On Churches.</i>           | 4. <i>On Charities and Reform.</i> |
| Cazneau Palfrey, <i>Belfast.</i> | W. H. Hadley, <i>Portland.</i>     |
| J. T. G. Nichols, <i>Saco.</i>   | E. E. Bourne, <i>Kennebunk.</i>    |
| F. M. Sabine, <i>Bangor.</i>     | Thomas Chadwick, <i>Portland.</i>  |
| J. Jewett, <i>Portland.</i>      | Edward Fenno, <i>Augusta.</i>      |
| T. D. Howard, <i>Perry.</i>      | James H. Baker, <i>Portland.</i>   |
| 2. <i>On Sunday Schools.</i>     | 5. <i>On Publications.</i>         |
| J. T. G. Nichols, <i>Saco.</i>   | M. W. Willis, <i>Bath.</i>         |
| Henry F. Edes, <i>Eastport.</i>  | J. H. Allen, <i>Bangor.</i>        |
| T. D. Howard, <i>Perry.</i>      | Amos Nourse, <i>Bath.</i>          |
| G. W. Bourne, <i>Kennebunk.</i>  | Edward Fenno, <i>Augusta.</i>      |
| J. S. Cushing, <i>Brunswick.</i> | C. Palfrey, <i>Belfast.</i>        |
| 3. <i>On Missions.</i>           | 6. <i>On Church Art.</i>           |
| A. D. Wheeler, <i>Brunswick.</i> | J. A. Swan, <i>Kennebunk.</i>      |
| E. J. Gerry, <i>Standish.</i>    | R. P. Cutler, <i>Portland.</i>     |
| T. S. Lathrop, <i>Calais.</i>    | O. J. Fernald, <i>Thomaston.</i>   |
| E. H. Neal, <i>Skowhegan.</i>    | J. W. Tufts, <i>Bangor.</i>        |
| C. Spaulding, <i>Hallowell.</i>  | H. V. Bartol, <i>Portland.</i>     |